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DOCTOR STRANGE™
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS
TO SAVE THE WOMAN HE LOVES, THE SORCERER SUPREME MUST VOYAGE TO THE LAND BEYOND THE LIVING!
TRAPPED BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEAD!

Once he was a man like most *others* — a *worldly* man, seduced and jaded by *material* things. But then he discovered the *separate* reality, where *sorcery* and *men's souls* shaped the forces that shape our *lives*. In that instant, he was *born again*, to become a man like *no* other—a man who left us *behind*, as he strove to stand against the unseen subtle perils hovering *thick* and *black* around our fragile existence...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

STEVE ENGLEHART / AUTHOR | GENE COLAN / ARTIST | TOM PALMER / INKER/COLORIST | JOHN COSTANZA / CALLIGRAPHER | MARV WOLFMAN / EDITOR

YOU AND YOUR WOMAN, AND THE MAN WHO SOUGHT A MESSIAH, HAVE FOUND YOUR LIVES TO BE HELL ON EARTH, DR. STRANGE...
...AND SATAN LOATHES ALL SHAM! YOU MUST HAVE THE REAL THING, BY ALL MEANS-- FOREVER!
BY THE MYSTIC MAZE OF MADNESS, I SWEAR IT WILL NOT BE SO!

BEELZEBUB ON PARADE!

WARNING! THIS IS ANOTHER TALE UNLIKE ANY YOU'VE EVER SEEN! IT CONSISTS OF A JOURNEY THROUGH HELL-- AND HELL IS NOT A PLACE OF PLEASURE! YOU MAY FIND IT UNSETTLING... STRANGE... BUT THAT IS THE WAY IT MUST BE!

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YOU COULDN'T ACCEPT IT, COULD YOU? YOU ALONE KNEW THE SECRET OF YOUR WORLD'S DEATH AND REBIRTH--*
--AND YOUR FAILED RESPONSIBILITY AS PROTECTOR TO THE FOUR BILLION MAGGOTS CRAWLING 'ROUND THAT SACROSANCT SPHERE PROVED TOO BURDENSOME!**
YOU WORRIED ABOUT THEIR LEARNING OF THEIR TERRIFYING FATE--
--AND YOU WORRIED ABOUT YOUR NOT TELLING THEM!
YOU WORRIED ABOUT REALITY-- YOU WORRIED ABOUT ILLUSION--
--YOU WORRIED ABOUT LIFE, AND DEATH, AND ALL THE OTHER MYSTERIES--
--AND IN THE END, THERE WAS ONLY ONE HAVEN LEFT TO YOU--THE HAVEN FOR ALL LOST SOULS--
--MINE!
*STRANGE #3. **#14. --MARV.

CALL ME SATAN, MYSTIC--OR CALL ME LUCIFER!
THE GRATING VOICE BECOMES MICK JAGGER'S!
CALL ME MEPHISTOPHELES, OR BEELZEBUB, OR OLD NICK! MY NAME IS LEGION!
THE VOICE GOES GUTTERAL AGAIN!
CALL ME WHAT YOU WILL, BUT REMEMBER, FOR EVERY INSTANT OF YOUR ETERNAL DAMNATION--
--YOU GAVE YOURSELF TO ME! YES, AND CLEA AND JAMES MANDARIN, AS WELL!
NO, MIGHTY ONE! NOW THAT MY ENEMY HAS A FACE--A FORM--I KNOW WHAT IT IS I MUST FIGHT!
NOW IT'S NOT DOUBT AND FEAR THAT PLAGUE ME, UNSEEN! NOW I'LL--
--I'LL--
--I'LL KILL YOU, DRACULA!
DEMONS OF DENAK! STEPHEN'S GONE MAD!
HOLD! THIS IS NOT DRACULA! HE IS NOT HERE!
THEN, IT'S BLOOD I MUST HAVE--BLOOD FROM THAT PULSING THROAT BEFORE ME!
NO, NO, DOCTOR! CLEA IS MY SPECIAL PLEASURE! I MUST TAKE HER FROM YOU, BEFORE YOU DO HER HARM!

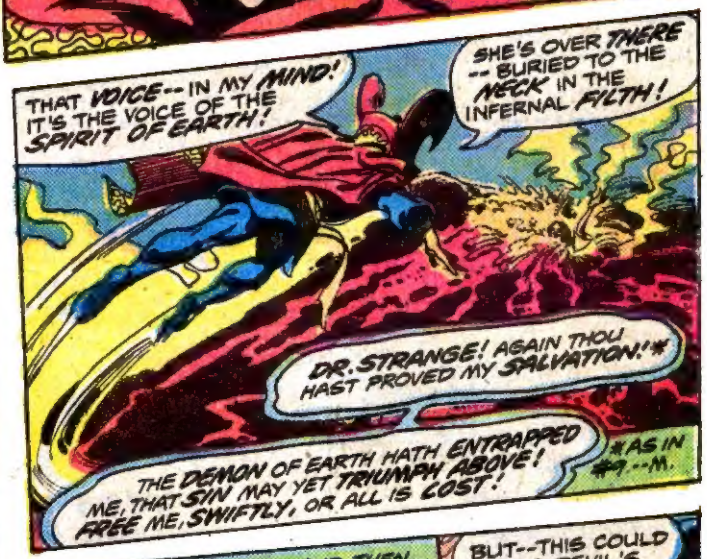
"WE SHALL SEE YOU LATER, PERHAPS --AFTER YOU'VE HAD TIME TO SLAKE YOUR LOVELY THIRST!"
EH--? A GOBLIN APPEARS FROM THE SMOKE--
--A FAT GOBLIN, SPONGY WITH COURSING RED BLOOD!
HE'S HELD! HE CANNOT ESCAPE!
HE'S MINE!
NO! BY ALL THE VISHANTI, NO!
WHAT AM I DOING??
THE STRUGGLE IS BRIEF, BUT MOST PAINFUL, FOR IT'S ALL IN THE MIND!
AND WHEN IT'S DONE..
THIS--IS NOT GOING TO BE AS SIMPLE AS I THOUGHT! EVIDENTLY, I MUST NOT ONLY BEAT THE DEVIL...
...BUT THE DARK SIDE OF MY OWN SOUL, AS WELL!
I'M AS WEAK AS I'VE EVER BEEN!
A VERY BLEAK THOUGHT INDEED...!
NOK NOK
RAMA KALIPH, SIR! LORD PHYFFE!
YES? WHAT IS IT, WONG?
MY MASTER AND MISTRESS! THEY'VE BEEN TAKEN-- BY THE UNHOLY ONE!
SATAN? VISHANTI PRESERVE US!
WE'LL NEED AN EXORCISM!
AND IT MAY WELL FAIL!

FAIL? YOU MUST NOT FAIL!
CAN YOU NOT FOLLOW THEM DIRECTLY, AND RESCUE THEM?

PFAGH! IF WE COULD GO WHERE DR. STRANGE GOES AND LIVE, WE'D BLOODY WELL BE DR. STRANGE, NOW WOULDN'T WE?
WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN--BUT EXORCISM IS A TRICKY BUSINESS!
WE'LL DO-- WHAT WE CAN!

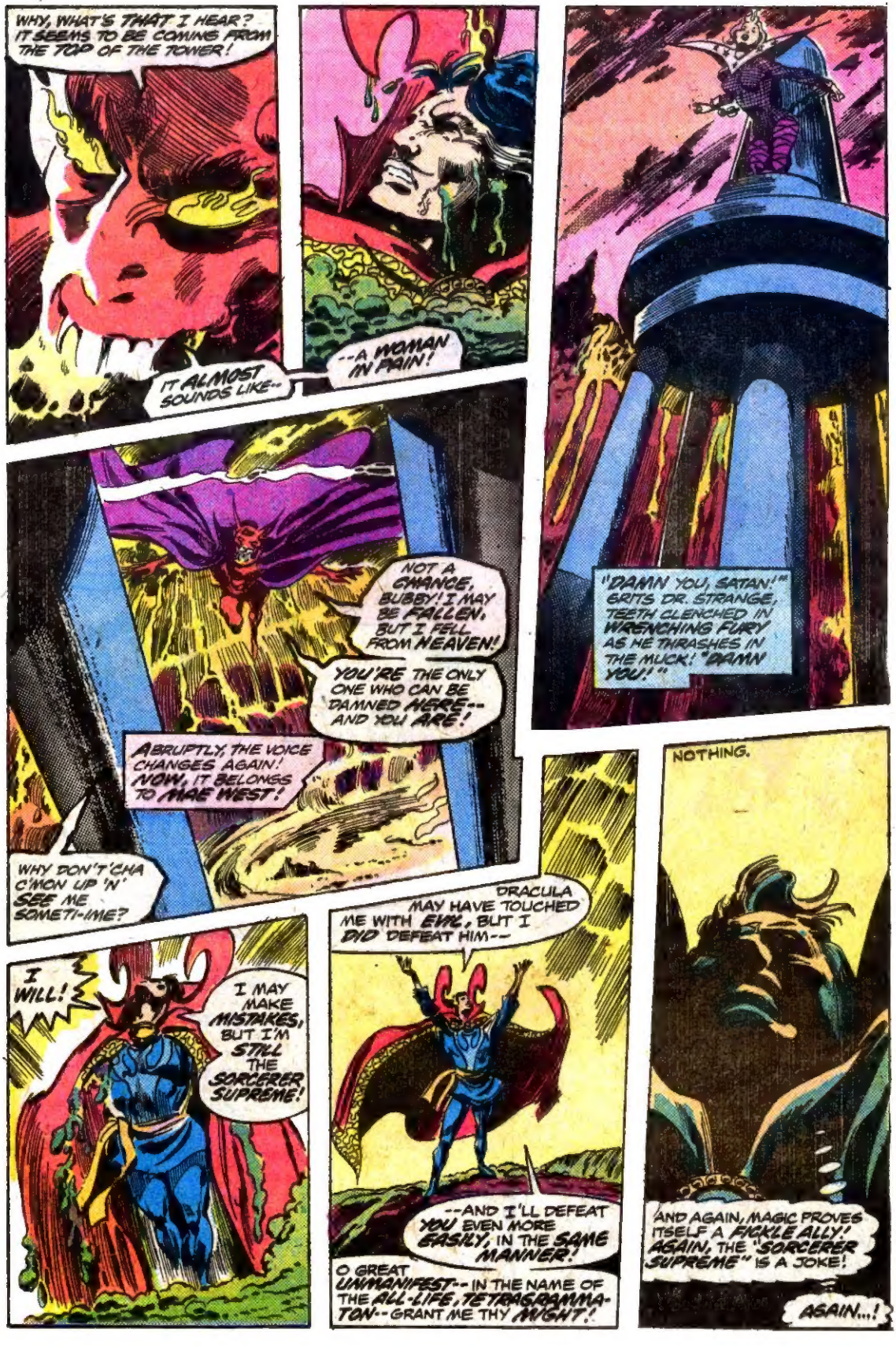
HELL...! THE DREGS OF DAMNATION, EXACTLY AS I'VE ALWAYS ENVISIONED IT!
AND I COULDN'T ENVISION A WORSE WAY TO ENCOUNTER IT--
--STILL TAINTED AS I AM BY DRACULA'S EVIL SPELL! I THOUGHT I'D CLEANSED MYSELF OF IT, BUT I WAS WRONG. MY ENCHANTMENTS REMAIN UNRELIABLE! *
THAT WAS A COSTLY MISTAKE! I MUST MAKE NO MORE!
* AS IN THE PAST TWO ISSUES. -- M.

NO WONDER THE WORLD HAS SEEMED SO DARK SINCE--
HELP! HELP MEEEEE--!!

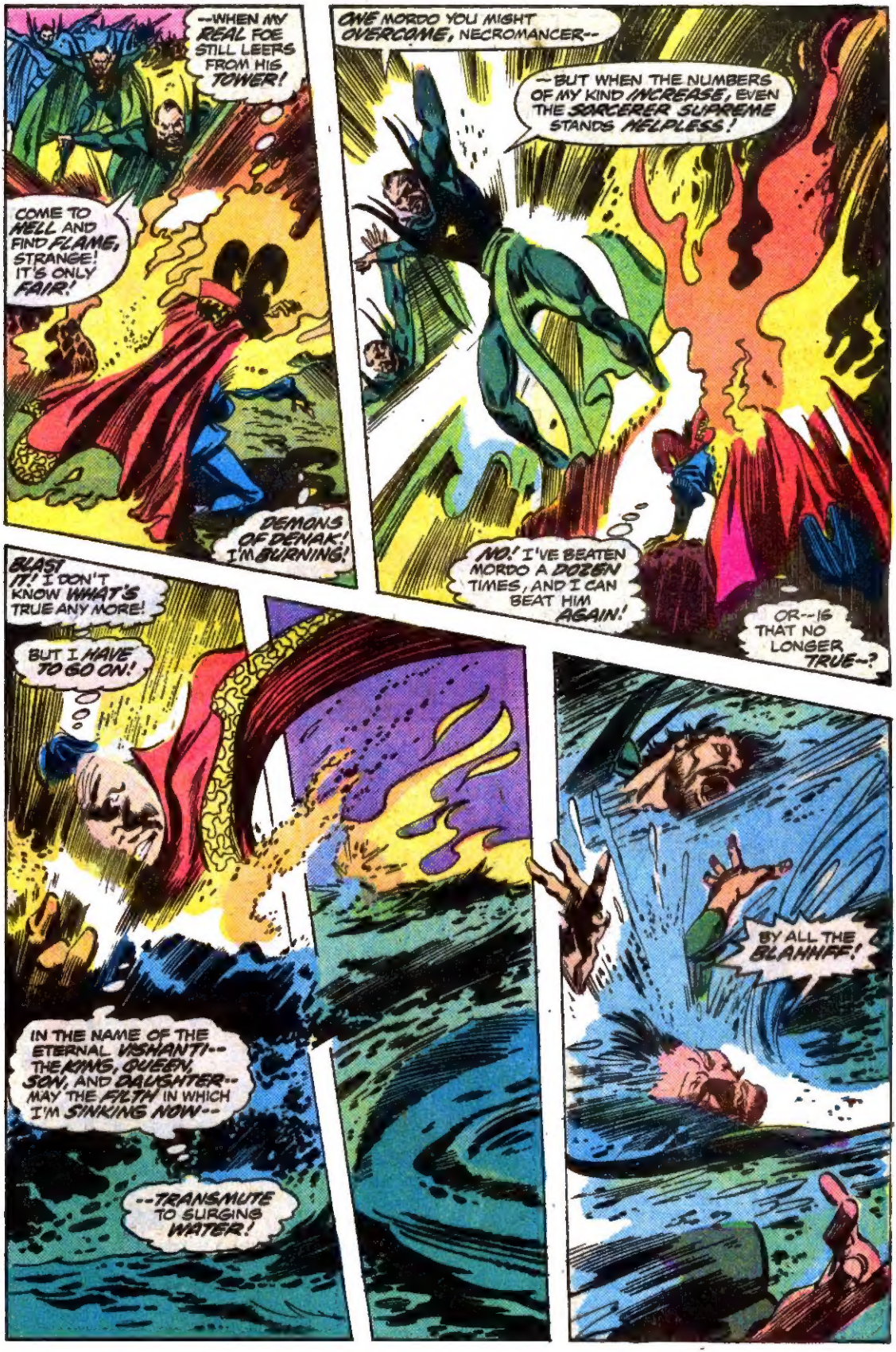

THAT VOICE-- IN MY MIND! IT'S THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT OF EARTH!
SHE'S OVER THERE -- BURIED TO THE NECK IN THE INFERNAL FILTH!
DR. STRANGE! AGAIN THOU HAST PROVED MY SALVATION! *
THE DEMON OF EARTH HATH ENTRAPPED ME, THAT SIN MAY YET TRIUMPH ABOVE! FREE ME, SWIFTLY, OR ALL IS LOST!
* AS IN #9 --M.

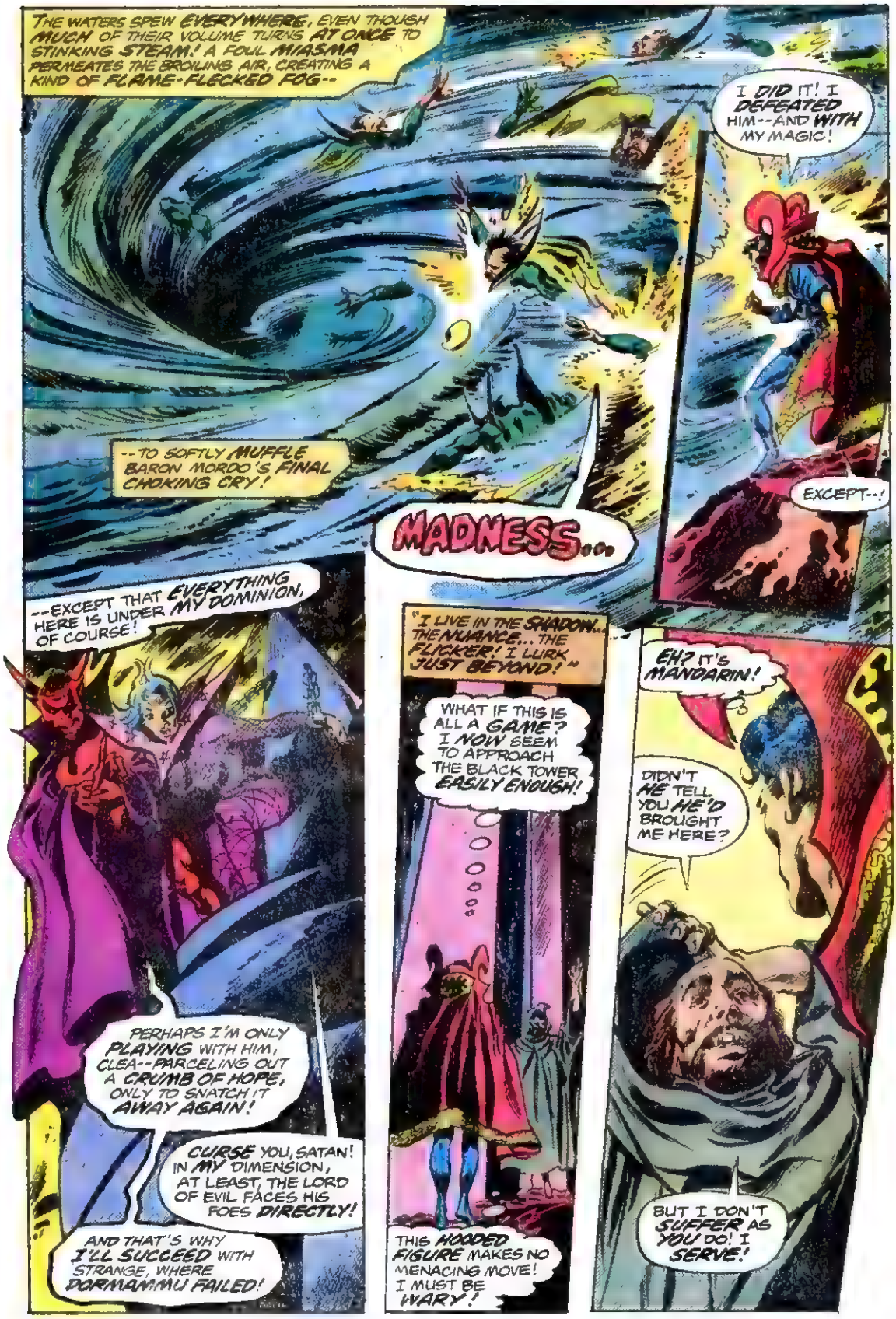
THE MASTER LANDS... AND THEN... HESITATES...
BUT--THIS COULD BE A DEVIL'S TRICK--!
TRICK? NAY, MY MORTAL SON! HELP ME!
EVEN THEN...

..HE HOLDS BACK... BEFORE REACHING HIS DECISION!
ALL RIGHT! BUT MAY THE VISHANTI PROTECT ME--
--IF I'M WRONG AGAIN!
WRONG?
HOW COULD ONE ENGAGED IN SUCH A NOBLE ACT EVER BE WRONG, MY SON?
MY SPELL! SHE'S GRASPED MY OWN FORCE--!
SPLATT!
AND THE LAUGHTER OF SATAN TAKES FLAMING FORM!
MARVELOUS! HE TRUSTS IN THE SIGHTS OF HELL!
OH, YOU'RE GOING TO ENJOY YOUR LIFE WITH ME, MY BOY!
LOOK! SEE WHAT I HAVE LINED UP FOR YOU NEXT!
FOOL! FOOL! FOOL!


WHY, WHAT'S THAT I HEAR? IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM THE TOP OF THE TOWER!
IT ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE--
--A WOMAN IN PAIN!
"DAMN YOU, SATAN!" GRITS DR. STRANGE, TEETH CLENCHED IN WRENCHING FURY AS HE THRASHES IN THE MUCK! "DAMN YOU!"
NOT A CHANCE, BUBBY! I MAY BE FALLEN, BUT I FELL FROM HEAVEN!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BE DAMNED HERE-- AND YOU ARE!
ABRUPTLY, THE VOICE CHANGES AGAIN! NOW, IT BELONGS TO MAE WEST!
WHY DON'T'CHA C'MON UP 'N' SEE ME SOMETI-IME?
I WILL!
I MAY MAKE MISTAKES, BUT I'M STILL THE SORCERER SUPREME!
DRACULA MAY HAVE TOUCHED ME WITH EVIL, BUT I DID DEFEAT HIM--
--AND I'LL DEFEAT YOU EVEN MORE EASILY, IN THE SAME MANNER!
O GREAT UNMANIFEST-- IN THE NAME OF THE ALL-LIFE, TETRAGRAMMATON-- GRANT ME THY AUGHT!
NOTHING.
AND AGAIN, MAGIC PROVES ITSELF A FICKLE ALLY! AGAIN, THE "SORCERER SUPREME" IS A JOKE!
AGAIN...!

YOU MAY THINK, MY FRIEND, THAT DR. STRANGE HAS SUNK ABOUT AS LOW AS ANY HERO EVER HAS...
...AND YET, YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT DURING THE DRACULA BATTLE, IT WAS SAID, "THIS IS NOT THE DR. STRANGE YOU'VE COME TO KNOW, IN SEVERAL SENSES..."
CAN IT BE THAT I'VE LOST MY WAY FOR GOOD? I'VE OFTEN CONSIDERED THE LINE BETWEEN MAGICK AND MADNESS TO BE THIN--
--YET I NEVER SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THAT I COULD CROSS IT!
BUT MY CONTROL OF EVENTS HAS SLIPPED AWAY, AND THAT CONTROL IS IN THE MIND! IF-- IF MY MIND HAS FINALLY--
BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH!
MADNESS, STRANGE!
MADNESS IS CHAOS-- THE WORLD INSIDE-OUT--
--AND WHO AMONG US CAN SAY YOU ARE ALWAYS RIGHTSIDE-IN, WHILE BARON MORDO MUST BE FOREVER LOST?
YOU FORGOT ABOUT ME--
--DIDN'T YOU--
-- MY HATED FRIEND?
IN THE EXCITEMENT OF A REBORN WORLD-- THE EXCITEMENT WHICH HAS SO CAUGHT YOUR FANCY--
--YOU FORGOT ABOUT POOR MAD MORDO!
BUT MORDO REMEMBERS YOU!
NO, I HADN'T FORGOTTEN! BUT WITH DRACULA, AND JAMES MANDARIN, THERE'S BEEN NO TIME--!
EVEN NOW, MORDO IS MORE AN INTRUSION THAN ANYTHING ELSE--


--WHEN MY REAL FOE STILL LEERS FROM HIS TOWER!
COME TO HELL AND FIND FLAME, STRANGE! IT'S ONLY FAIR!
DEMONS OF DENAK! I'M BURNING!
ONE MORDO YOU MIGHT OVERCOME, NECROMANCER--
--BUT WHEN THE NUMBERS OF MY KIND INCREASE, EVEN THE SORCERER SUPREME STANDS HELPLESS!
NO! I'VE BEATEN MORDO A DOZEN TIMES, AND I CAN BEAT HIM AGAIN!
OR--IS THAT NO LONGER TRUE--?
BLAST IT! I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S TRUE ANY MORE!
BUT I HAVE TO GO ON!
IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI--THE KING, QUEEN, SON, AND DAUGHTER--MAY THE FILTH IN WHICH I'M SINKING NOW--
--TRANSMUTE TO SURGING WATER!
BY ALL THE BLAHHFF!

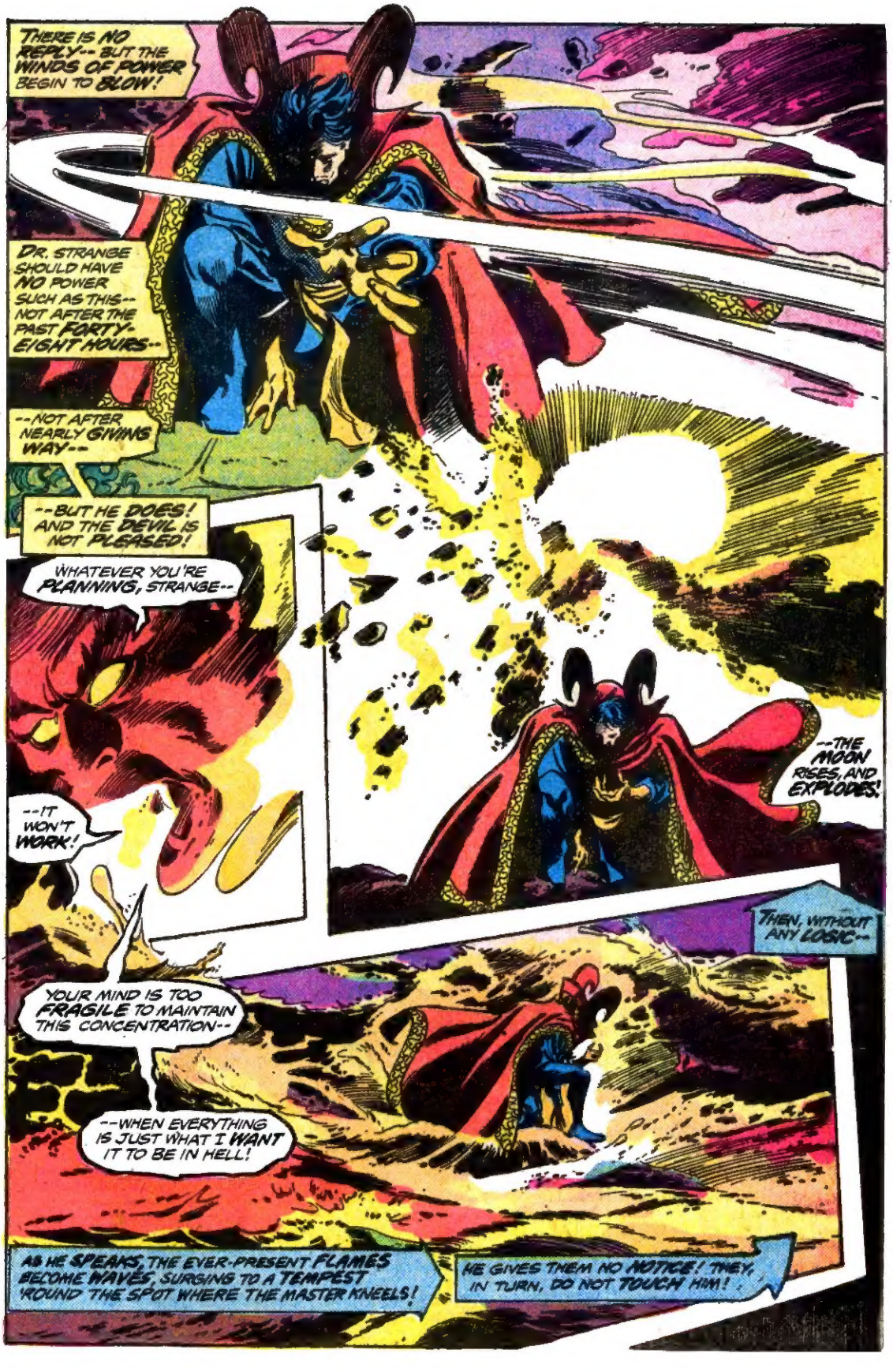

THE WATERS SPEW EVERYWHERE, EVEN THOUSH MUCH OF THEIR VOLUME TURNS AT ONCE TO STINKING STEAM! A FOUL MIASMA PERMEATES THE BROILING AIR, CREATING A KIND OF FLAME-FLECKED FOG--
--TO SOFTLY MUFFLE BARON MORDO'S FINAL CHOKING CRY!
MADNESS...
I DID IT! I DEFEATED HIM--AND WITH MY MAGIC!
EXCEPT--!
--EXCEPT THAT EVERYTHING HERE IS UNDER MY DOMINION, OF COURSE!
PERHAPS I'M ONLY PLAYING WITH HIM, CLEA--PARCELING OUT A CRUMB OF HOPE, ONLY TO SNATCH IT AWAY AGAIN!
CURSE YOU, SATAN! IN MY DIMENSION, AT LEAST, THE LORD OF EVIL FACES HIS FOES DIRECTLY!
AND THAT'S WHY I'LL SUCCEED WITH STRANGE, WHERE DORMAMMU FAILED!
"I LIVE IN THE SHADOW... THE NUANCE... THE FLICKER! I LURK JUST BEYOND!"
WHAT IF THIS IS ALL A GAME? I NOW SEEM TO APPROACH THE BLACK TOWER EASILY ENOUGH!
THIS HOODED FIGURE MAKES NO MENACING MOVE! I MUST BE WARY!
EH? IT'S MANDARIN!
DIDN'T ME TELL YOU HE'D BROUGHT ME HERE?
BUT I DON'T SUFFER AS YOU DO! I SERVE!

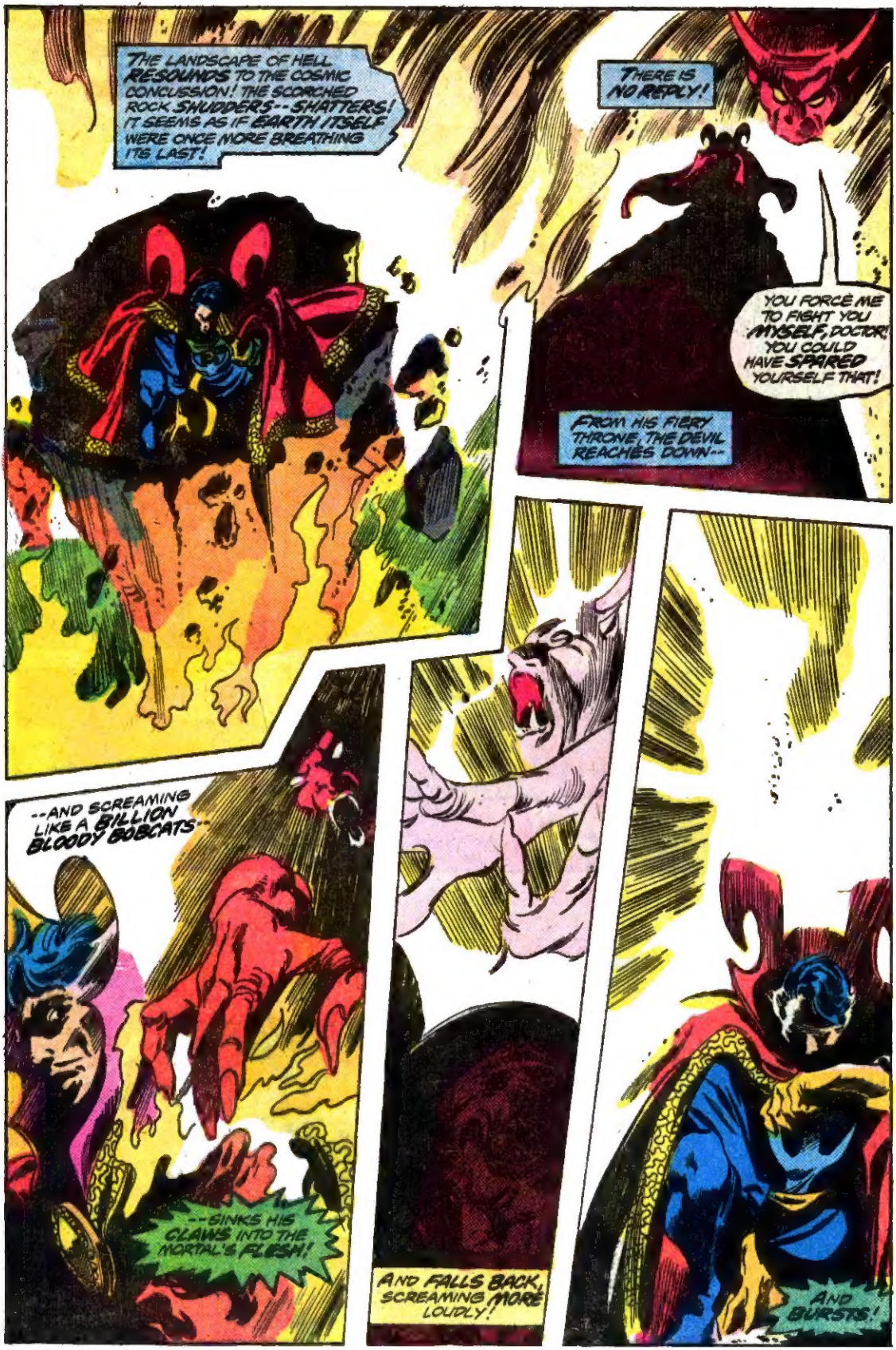
NOW, IF YOU THINK SERVICE IS A WORSE FATE THAN DEFIANCE--
--PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE TO SAVE ME-- AND DENIED ME, INSTEAD!
SILENCE, MANDARIN! I'LL HEAR NONE OF IT!
YES, JIMMY! STEPHEN HAS BIGGER FISH TO FRY--AS IT WERE!
SURELY IT'S TIME FOR ME TO ASSUME ANOTHER OF MY GUISES--
--THAT OF THE OLD SERPENT ITSELF!
IT WAS IN THIS FORM THAT I TEMPTED EVE, AS YOUR LEGENDS SO OFTEN TELL IT!
THAT WAS THE FIRST EVIL, BUT NOT THE LAST! NEVER THE LAST!
HE STRUCK ALMOST FASTER THAN I COULD SEE! CRUSHING ME--CAN'T BREATHE--!
I JUST GO ON FOREVER, WHILE MORTALS KEEP DYING LIKE FLIES!
HE'S MOCKING ME, BUT EVERYTHING HE SAYS IS TRUE! ALL THE FORCES I FACE ARE ETERNAL!
WHAT HAS MAN EVER DONE TO CHANGE THEM?
HE WILL LET YOU LIVE-- AND LIVE FOREVER-- IF YOU CEASE TO STRUGGLE!
ACCEPT HIM! ACCEPT HIS ENDLESS POWER! GRANT HIM YOUR SOUL-- AND SUFFER NO MORE!
YOUR PAIN COMES ONLY FROM SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE!
I WILL NOT! THERE MUST BE AN ESCAPE!
THERE MUST BE!
BUT IS THERE?

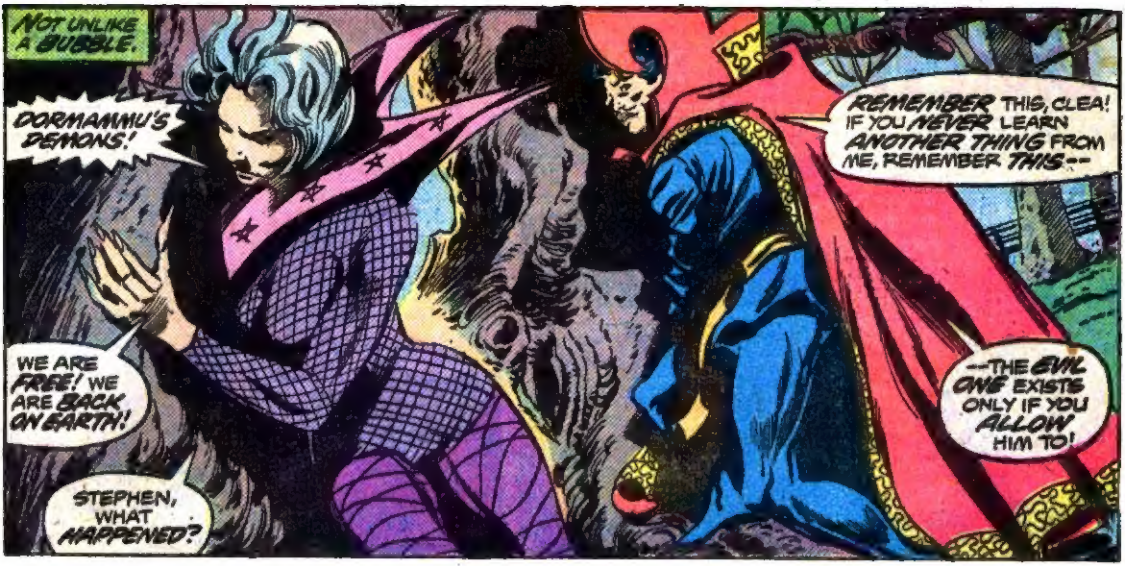
IN THIS INSTANCE, IT SEEMS, THERE IS! --AS HIS DESPERATE EFFORT PAYS OFF!
:GLUNNGH!:
BUT HOW ABOUT NEXT TIME?
THERE'LL BE A NEXT TIME-- OF COURSE!
NOT ONCE I RESCUE CLEA!
THE TOWER-- GROWING!
OH, GIVE IT UP, YOU BOOB! YOU'RE BEGINNING TO SOUND MORE THAN A LITTLE ABSURD!
YOU CAN TALK ALL THE BRAVE TALK YOU WANT, BUT YOU HAVEN'T REALLY GOTTEN ANYWHERE IN ALL THIS TIME!
YOUR FAITH IS BECOMING FANATICISM, DON'T YOU THINK?
AH HA HA HA HA
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS CATCH ME, STRANGE!
YOU KNOW, REACH THE TOP AND PUNCH ME OUT, AND RIDE OFF INTO THE SUNSET!
THAT'S THE PLAN, ISN'T IT?

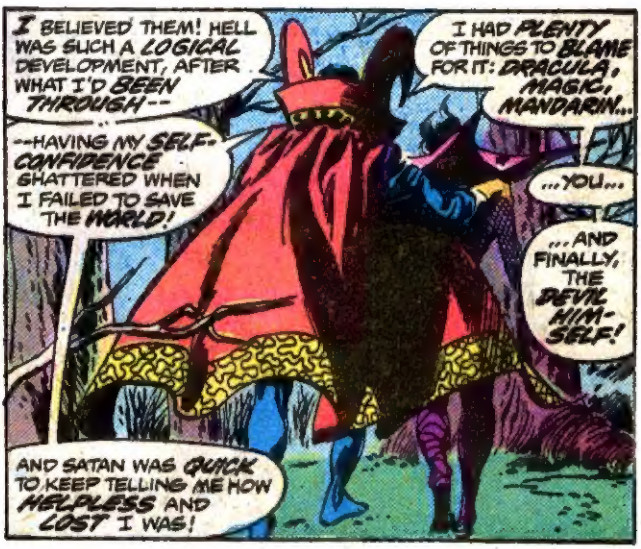
AWW, BUT YOU DON'T THINK THAT'S FAIR! YOU'D ALMOST REACHED YOUR LADY-LOVE!
HERE, I'LL BRING HER BACK TO YOU!
I'LL DISSOLVE THE TOWER!
CLEA!
FRANTICALLY NOW, THE MAGE HURTLES TOWARD THE CHAINED AND HELPLESS FIGURE!
EYES STING-ING IN THE HOT RUSHING WIND, HE CANNOT SEE THE GROUND! HE CANNOT KNOW HOW LONG HE HAS TO ACT! IF HIS HASTILY-MUTTERED SPELL TAKES TOO LONG--!
BUT NO! HE BREAKS HER FALL IN TIME!
--JUST IN TIME!
AGAIN, HE HAS MELD HIS OWN WITH SATAN!
SNAP
EXCEPT--
--THE FRAIL FIGURE SUDDENLY CHANGES!
YOU FELL FOR IT AGAIN! YOU HAVEN'T LEARNED A THING!
AND IN THAT INSTANT, DR. STRANGE FEELS ALL HIS DEFENSES CRUMBLE! IN THAT INSTANT, DR. STRANGE SUCCUMBS!

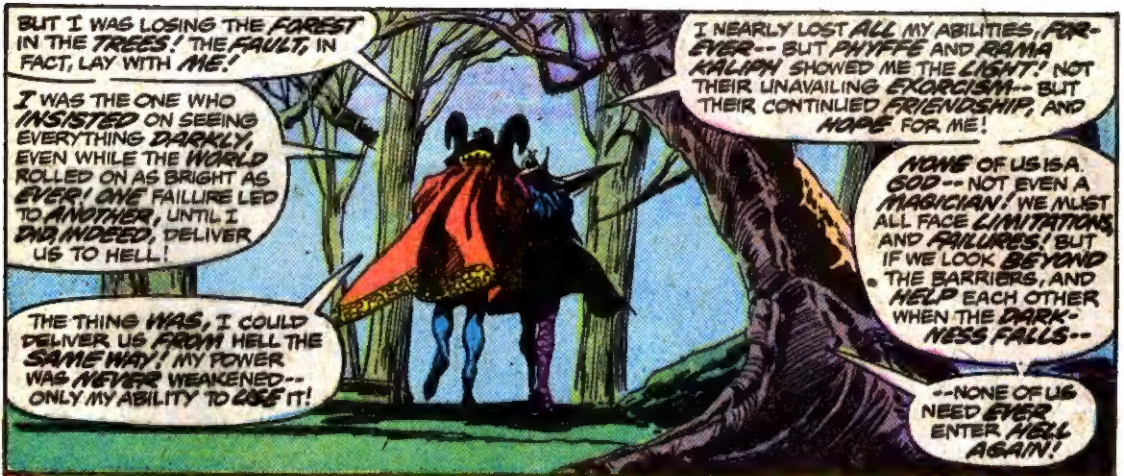
IN THAT INSTANT, DR. STRANGE TOPPLES TOWARD MADNESS!
WHAT--WHAT IS THIS I FEEL--?
I SENSE--CONCERN--
--FOR ME!
STABILITY--BACKING--!
IT IS--LORD PHYFFE AND RAMA KALIPH--
--PRAYING FOR MY SOUL!
AND YET...
ALL AT ONCE, THE WEARINESS EVAPORATES FROM HIS BROW!
ALL AT ONCE, HIS SHOULDERS NO LONGER STOOP!
ALL AT ONCE, EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEAR!
I DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT YOU! THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT!
THAT IS WHAT'S KEEPING ME HERE!
I'M LEAVING HERE, LUCIFER! WITH CLEA, AND MANDARIN! NOW!
LIKE HELL, SORCERER! YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME!
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHICH WAY IS UP!
BEELZABUB IS THE PRINCE OF LIES! I SEE IT NOW!
WHAT IS THIS, THEN? AN EXORCISM--PERHAPS IN CONCERT WITH YOUR FOREIGN FRIENDS ON THE SURFACE?
OH YES--I KNOW ALL ABOUT THEM! THEIR EFFORT IS FUTILE!
IMAGINE TRYING TO AFFECT THE DEVIL IN HIS OWN DOMAIN!
DOCTOR?


THERE IS NO REPLY-- BUT THE WINDS OF POWER BEGIN TO BLOW!
DR. STRANGE SHOULD HAVE NO POWER SUCH AS THIS-- NOT AFTER THE PAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS--
--NOT AFTER NEARLY GIVING WAY--
--BUT HE DOES! AND THE DEVIL IS NOT PLEASED!
WHATEVER YOU'RE PLANNING, STRANGE--
--IT WON'T WORK!
--THE MOON RISES, AND EXPLODES!
THEN, WITHOUT ANY LOGIC--
YOUR MIND IS TOO FRAGILE TO MAINTAIN THIS CONCENTRATION--
--WHEN EVERYTHING IS JUST WHAT I WANT IT TO BE IN HELL!
AS HE SPEAKS, THE EVER-PRESENT FLAMES BECOME WAVES, SURGING TO A TEMPEST 'ROUND THE SPOT WHERE THE MASTER KNEELS!
HE GIVES THEM NO NOTICE! THEY, IN TURN, DO NOT TOUCH HIM!


THE LANDSCAPE OF HELL RESOUNDS TO THE COSMIC CONCUSSION! THE SCORCHED ROCK SHUDDERS--SHATTERS! IT SEEMS AS IF EARTH ITSELF WERE ONCE MORE BREATHING ITS LAST!
THERE IS NO REPLY!
YOU FORCE ME TO FIGHT YOU MYSELF, DOCTOR! YOU COULD HAVE SPARED YOURSELF THAT!
FROM HIS FIERY THRONE, THE DEVIL REACHES DOWN--
--AND SCREAMING LIKE A BILLION BLOODY BOBCATS--
--SINKS HIS CLAWS INTO THE MORTAL'S FLESH!
AND FALLS BACK, SCREAMING MORE LOUDLY!
AND BURSTS!


NOT UNLIKE A BUBBLE.
DORMAMMU'S DEMONS!
WE ARE FREE! WE ARE BACK ON EARTH!
STEPHEN, WHAT HAPPENED?
REMEMBER THIS, CLEA! IF YOU NEVER LEARN ANOTHER THING FROM ME, REMEMBER THIS--
--THE EVIL ONE EXISTS ONLY IF YOU ALLOW HIM TO!


I BELIEVED THEM! HELL WAS SUCH A LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, AFTER WHAT I'D BEEN THROUGH--
--HAVING MY SELF-CONFIDENCE SHATTERED WHEN I FAILED TO SAVE THE WORLD!
AND SATAN WAS QUICK TO KEEP TELLING ME HOW HELPLESS AND LOST I WAS!
I HAD PLENTY OF THINGS TO BLAME FOR IT: DRACULA, MAGIC, MANDARIN...
...YOU...
...AND FINALLY, THE DEVIL HIMSELF!


BUT I WAS LOSING THE FAREST IN THE TREES! THE FAULT, IN FACT, LAY WITH ME!
I WAS THE ONE WHO INSISTED ON SEEING EVERYTHING DARKLY, EVEN WHILE THE WORLD ROLLED ON AS BRIGHT AS EVER! ONE FAILURE LED TO ANOTHER, UNTIL I DID INDEED, DELIVER US TO HELL!
THE THING WAS, I COULD DELIVER US FROM HELL THE SAME WAY! MY POWER WAS NEVER WEAKENED--ONLY MY ABILITY TO USE IT!
I NEARLY LOST ALL MY ABILITIES, FOREVER--BUT PHYFFE AND RAMA KHAN SHOWED ME THE LIGHT! NOT THEIR UNAVAILING EXORCISM--BUT THEIR CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP, AND HOPE FOR ME!
NONE OF US IS A GOD--NOT EVEN A MAGICIAN! WE MUST ALL FACE LIMITATIONS, AND FAILURES! BUT IF WE LOOK BEYOND THE BARRIERS, AND HELP EACH OTHER WHEN THE DARKNESS FALLS--
--NONE OF US NEED EVER ENTER HELL AGAIN!

NEXT
THE FATE OF JAMES MANDARIN! A MOLDERING MANUSCRIPT! AND--
THE OCCULT HISTORY OF AMERICA!